

### **REMARKS**

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-13 are pending. Claims 1 and 8 are amended. Claims 1, 2, and 8 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

#### **Specification Changes**

Paragraphs [0015] and [0018] are amended herein merely to correct minor informalities.

#### **Drawings**

FIG. 4 is objected to because only that which is old is illustrated. In response, one sheet of corrected formal drawings is being submitted concurrently with this amendment to properly label FIG. 4 as "Background Art". Withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

#### **Allowable Subject Matter**

The Examiner states that claims 2-7 are allowed, and that claims 9-13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. In response, the novel subject matter of allowed claim 2 has been

incorporated into independent claim 1 and 8. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 8 should be in condition for allowance.

**Claim for Priority**

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has recognized the Applicant's claim for foreign priority. In view of the fact that the Applicant's claim for foreign priority has been perfected, no additional action is required from the Applicant at this time.

**Acknowledgement of Information Disclosure Statement**

The Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement filed on February 27, 2002. An initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 has been returned by the Examiner. No further action is necessary at this time.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)**

Claims 1 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fry (U.S. 6,148,262) in view of Chatzipetros et al. (U.S. 6,295,033). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, the novel subject matter of allowed claim 2 is incorporated herein into independent claims 1 and 8. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 8, and claims 9-13 which depend from independent claim 8, are in condition for allowance. Since all claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

**CONCLUSION**

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

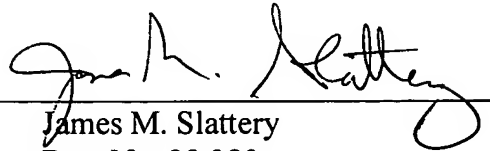
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.


If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By   
James M. Slattery  
Reg. No. 28,380

0505-0957P  
JMS/CTT/mua  


P. O. Box 747  
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000

Attachment: One (1) replacement drawing sheet.